

Connections

November 2006

Changing Safety Belt Law Is Top Legislative Priority

by Sally Oxenhandler

MoDOT and its safety partners will make changing Missouri's safety belt law to allow for primary enforcement its top legislative priority for the 2007 session. Under the current law, law enforcement can only cite drivers for failing to wear their safety belts when they are stopped for some other traffic offense.

"Of the more than 500 Missouri traffic offenses, this is the only one restricted to secondary enforcement," said Director Pete Rahn. "That's just plain wrong, and we need to do something to fix it."

A primary safety belt law could:

- Save approximately 90 lives a year and prevent more than 1,000 serious injuries;
- Save Missourians approximately \$231 million a year in costs associated with traffic crashes;
- Reduce Medicaid costs in Missouri by approximately \$103 million over a 10-year period;
- Qualify Missouri for an additional \$16 million in federal funds for transportation; and
- Reduce the costs to employers who face lost productivity, higher insurance premiums and increased workers' compensation and medical costs when employees are injured in traffic crashes.

As part of the legislative push, the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety



has created a task force to help inform Missourians about the importance of a primary safety belt law, as well as to work with legislators to garner support.

Called the Primary Safety Belt Partners, the task force's steering committee is made up of the following groups: AAA, DaimlerChrysler, Federal Highway Administration, Ford Motor Company, General Motors, State Farm Insurance, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Missouri Department of Transportation, the Missouri Hospital Association, the Missouri Insurance Coalition, the Missouri Safety Center, the Missouri Safety Council, the Missouri State Medical Association and the National Safety Council.

The Primary Safety Belt Partners hosted five regional rallies from September to

November in Cape Girardeau, St. Louis, Springfield, Kansas City and Hannibal to help get grass-roots support for changing Missouri's seat belt law. The rallies were designed to generate community backing, with the ultimate goal of influencing

the state to develop strategies for getting Missouri's safety belt law changed.

Changing Missouri's safety belt law to allow for primary enforcement has long been a top priority for safety officials throughout the state. Sixty-eight percent

Sixty-eight percent of the people who die in Missouri traffic crashes are not wearing a safety belt.

Missourians to voice support for a primary safety belt law.

The rallies also set the stage for a statewide safety belt summit to be held in Columbia on Nov. 14. The summit will gather together community leaders from throughout

of the people who die in Missouri traffic crashes are not wearing a safety belt. The legislative push also comes at a time when Missouri's safety belt use is on the decline.

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Blunt Honors Springfield Concrete Crew for Smooth, Efficient Work

by Bob Edwards and Angela Eden

The Springfield District's Concrete Crew sawed and poured more than 4,000 full-depth patches in the last year and a half along 307 miles of SRI routes at \$717,000 under contractor cost and, in the process, they earned themselves a 2006 Governor's Award for Quality and Productivity.

The crew was one of only four state government groups honored this year out of 40 candidates.

sake of making the services each of us, the taxpayers, paid for more affordable," said Gov. Matt Blunt, making presentations Oct. 10 in the Capitol Rotunda.

In January 2005, District Maintenance Engineer Dave O'Connor and Roy Stoddard, special Maintenance supervisor of concrete/bridge, began struggling with how to tackle the formidable task. Failure was not an option.

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Primary Safety Belt Information on SaveMOLives.com

**ARRIVE
ALIVE**

Visit www.savemolives.com to find complete information on MoDOT's efforts with the Primary Safety Belt Law initiative.

Resources include:

- Information on becoming a partner and how to show your support
- A call to action for partners to promote the initiative
- Statewide Safety Belt Summit information
- Information and statistics regarding Missouri's safety belt use
- Educational video and talking points



District 8 Concrete Crew members receive a 2006 Governor's Award for Quality and Productivity at a ceremony in Jefferson City. Front row, from left: Roy Stoddard, Mark Knight, Ronnie Sawyers, Organizational Results Director Mara Campbell and Gov. Matt Blunt. Back row, from left: Billie Torner, Billy McHaffie, Dave O'Connor, Robert Owens and Gary Stevens. Not pictured: Tim Pogue.

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MoDOT Crews Gear Up for Winter Weather

by Megan Mills

A chill in the air and leaves changing to vibrant colors are the first signals of cold weather. While you dig up your scarf, mittens and hat and dust off your winter coat and boots, MoDOT crews are busy dusting off their winter gear too - 1,800 snow-removal vehicles – in anticipation of the winter’s ice and snow.

Since 2000, MoDOT has spent approximately \$27.6 million annually on snow and ice removal. However, last year’s mild winter saved MoDOT about \$10 million. Even with a mild winter, more than 3,000 employees spent more than 292,000 hours on snow and ice prevention and removal.

“This winter we will continue using the same basic tools to fight snow and ice: a priority system of routes to determine which roadways are cleared first, dedicated employees who work in shifts around the clock and a stockpile of snow and ice removal equipment and other materials,” said State Maintenance Engineer Jim Carney.

The following are priority levels for snow and ice-removal:

Priority 1
Highest traffic-volume roadways are cleared first, including interstates and other major routes. These



District 4 Intermediate Crew Worker Howard Donahue checks equipment inside his cab before heading out in wintry weather.

roads receive continuous treatment throughout a storm.

Priority 2
Heaviest-traveled sections of state numbered and lettered routes.

Priority 3
Lower-volume lettered or numbered routes. MoDOT pays special attention to routes traveled by school buses and commuters.

Priority 4
During regular work hours, workers clean up accumulation on shoulders, bridge edges and interchanges.

“Maintenance crews work hard to clear roadways as quickly as possible after a snowfall, and the priority system works to get traffic moving again as smoothly as possible,” Carney said.

Although MoDOT works hard to clear roads fast and make them safe for motorists, it is also the motorist’s job to drive cautiously, pay extra attention to signs and drive defensively.

Blunt Honors Springfield Crew

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The solution meant that planning and staging had to encompass many miles along a given road, not the scattered jobs the crew typically must undertake.

“It had to be a flowing type of operation,” O’Connor said.

To that end, the regular concrete crew was increased to 22 full-time and seasonal employees, with several workers recruited from other maintenance operations in the district. Extra equipment needed for the job was borrowed.

The expanded crew was divided into a 10-member metro crew and a 12-member rural crew. Workers were assigned specific duties in an assembly-line approach – traffic control, sawing, concrete removal, dowelling, pouring and finishing.

All these changes enabled the crews to average 35 to 40 patches a day, up from the normal maintenance production of 10 to 12 patches a day. The single-day high was 47 patches – on an especially busy eastbound Interstate 44 between Glenstone Avenue and Route 65 in Springfield as the crews joined forces to complete that section just before Memorial Day 2005.

The concrete pavement repairs were made on lengthy sections of I-44, Route 65, Route 60 and Route 13, including congested urban segments through Springfield.

The Springfield concrete crew remained safe during its SRI pavement repair campaign, although numerous close calls occurred in the well-marked work zones. There were 16 near-miss incidents in which vehicles drove into holes being worked on without hitting any workers. Nevertheless, the crew met its repair goals and suffered no lost-time accidents.

O’Connor and Stoddard credited district-wide support from many others for playing a major role in the crew’s accomplishments on the front line. For example, personnel and equipment from Maintenance, hurry-up equipment repairs in the district garage, work zone management help from Traffic and daily lane-closing information to the public from Community Relations.

The cooperation provided to the concrete crew meant that others often inconvenienced themselves and added to their own workload, O’Connor said. These MoDOT employees share in the award, he said.

However, he joked, “There’s a lot of people holding IOUs.”

District Engineer Dale Ricks summed things up this way: “Unbelievable volume of work. Outstanding quality. Phenomenal safety record. They cranked it out.”

Tabletop Discussions Educate Staff on Environmental Responsibilities

by Kristi Jamison

Design’s Environmental and Historic Preservation unit hit the road in late September and throughout October to deliver a vital training program to employees statewide. The environmental and historic preservation training sessions focused on educating many employees about being more environmentally responsible.

The Environmental and Historic Preservation unit established the training program to enable MoDOT to meet National Environmental Policy Act requirements and prevent us from committing environmental violations.

Training sessions were held in each district with staff primarily from Traffic, Design, Planning and Right of Way attending the all-day sessions. Construction and Maintenance staff attended half-day sessions, that contained information relevant to their work requirements.

Employees were divided into small groups at nine tables. At each table, trainers covered one or more of the following major topics: wetlands and Clean Water Act permits, hazardous waste, Request for Environmental Services, National Environmental Policy Act, public land use, socioeconomics,



Senior Environmental Specialist Kevin McHugh, far right, leads a discussion on public land use with several District 2 Design employees including, from left, Aaron McVicker, Steven Bhardwaj, Keith Killen, Joe Carter and District Engineer Dan Niec.

air quality, noise, endangered species, environmental commitments, archaeology, architecture and historic bridges. Each tabletop discussion lasted for 25 minutes, then each group rotated to a different table until all participants had covered each topic.

“Training sessions in District 3 were excellent,” said Northeast District Engineer Kirk Juranas. “Everybody I spoke with said the training was very beneficial. One project manager said it was some of the best training he

has attended. The staff delivered their training material very well and had many examples to help encourage good discussion.”

Staff attending the training session also earned professional development credits or general training credits on the LMS site. Training was originally recommended by the Environmental Quality Circle as part of the department’s environmental action plan.

Bonding: Boon or Boondoggle?

by Sally Oxenhandler

For many of us, making sense of financial bonds is sort of like trying to understand teenagers – mysterious and complex.

Yet the benefits of bonding are obvious. Issuing bonds allows us to start projects now, rather than later, thereby serving our customers more timely and efficiently. But bonding also equals debt, and debt is rarely seen as a good thing. With the bonds we’re issuing thanks to the passage of Amendment 3 have come some questions as to whether bonding is smart business or whether it’s digging us into a hole.

In reality, issuing bonds to pay for the projects included in our Smoother, Safer, Sooner program is exactly what the state constitution calls for us to do. The additional revenue we get under Amendment 3 from taxes that used to go to other agencies must be used to pay off the bonds. It can’t be used for anything else. That revenue is what’s financing the \$1.7 billion to \$1.9 billion worth of work that is making our roads smoother and allowing us to speed up projects and start new ones.

“Amendment 3 specifically requires us to issue bonds and use the Amendment 3 revenues to retire the debt,” said Chief Financial Officer Roberta Broeker. “In addition to sending more motor vehicle sales taxes to MoDOT, Amendment 3 created a State Road Bond Fund where that new money is deposited. The only way we can access the money in the State Road Bond Fund is by using it to pay off bonded debt. And we’re only going to borrow as much as we’re able to pay back with the new Amendment 3 revenues.”

Broeker said it’s also important to understand that we won’t still be paying for the car when it’s worn out and up on blocks. The average life of the bonds we’re selling ranges from seven years for the bonds we sold in 2005 to pay for Smooth Roads Initiative projects to 15 years for the bonds we sold in 2006. The 2006 bond proceeds will be used for the accelerated and new construction projects that have a much longer life.

Human Resources Web Site Gets an Upgrade

by Matt Hiebert

The Human Resources Web site has recently undergone a facelift.

Last month, Human Resources changed the look, feel and structure of its Web site to be easier to navigate and offer more content.

Graphics were added to give the site a more modern and appealing appearance, and new pages addressing MoDOT’s culture and benefits were launched to help job candidates and current employees better understand the benefits of working here.

jobs, locations of positions, background checks and other basic topics interviewees want to know about.

For current MoDOT employees, a new benefits page features an easy-to-understand analysis chart that shows the retirement and insurance advantages they get when they stick with the department.

Another addition to the site features a look at MoDOT culture. This page explains the department’s values and the

While there’s much more that goes into issuing bonds than meets the eye, the important thing to note is that the money coming in each year from Amendment 3 will cover the amount we borrow.

“If it weren’t for bonding, we wouldn’t be able to spend the Amendment 3 money,” Broeker said. “There would be no Smoother, Safer, Sooner.”

Amendment 3 funding has made life good for us these past few years, and that construction bubble will continue through 2009. After that, however, our construction program will return to the level it was before Amendment 3.

“Once we reach 2010, our construction

program will be right back to where it was before Amendment 3,” Director Pete Rahn said. “Our system will be in better condition, but we’ll be in the same financial situation as before, so our construction program will look a lot like a maintenance program. Without additional money, we won’t have very many major projects.”

In the near future, Rahn said, Missourians will have to decide what type of transportation system they want and fund it accordingly.

“Whether they’re willing to invest in the system will depend on how good a job they think we’re doing,” Rahn said.

For Your Benefit

New Awards for Staying Safe at Work

by Patti Knopke

Every year those employees with safety sensitive positions have the opportunity to receive a safety award for staying safe on the job and making safety a part of their everyday work at MoDOT. This year, the safety awards program has a new list of gifts.

“We’re really focused on following safety rules and regulations because we want our employees to return home safe and sound at the end of the day,” said Employee Safety and Health Manager Jean Endsley. “We are proud of those employees who stay safety oriented, and we are happy to reward them for their efforts.”

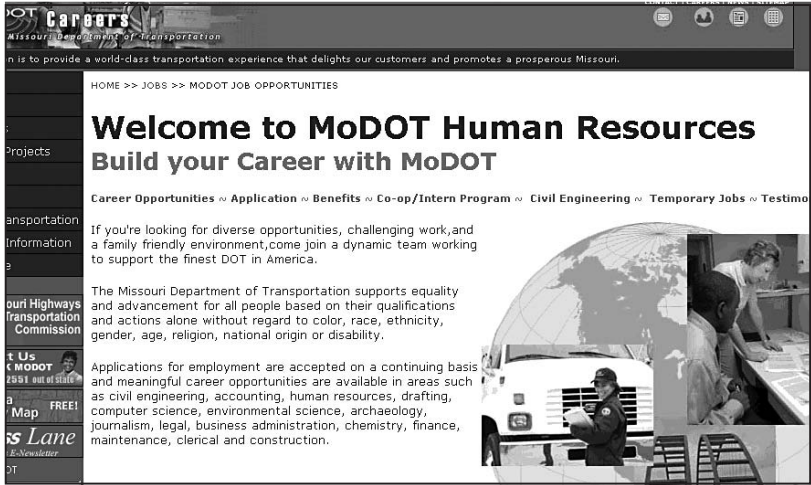
This year MoDOT’s 10 district safety and health managers spoke with employees about what they would like to receive as a safety award. Central office listened to the suggestions and has revamped the list of awards offered.

Employees will now be able to choose between a MoDOT knife, hooded jacket, four hours administrative leave or a \$50 gift card to Cabella’s, Wal-Mart or Bass Pro.

“We have increased the value of our safety awards this year,” Endsley said. “Safe work habits are extremely important to MoDOT, and we want our employees to realize we appreciate their attention to them.”

MOCafe Enrollment Deadline

Would you like to pay less in taxes and keep a little more of the money you earn this year? If you answered yes, then you should consider participating in the Missouri State Employee’s Cafeteria Plan, or MOCafe. The deadline for enrollment is Dec. 1, 2006. For more information about the cafeteria plan, go to www.mocafe.com or call 800-659-3035.



Multimedia is another addition to the upgrade. Videotaped testimonials from various employees give firsthand feedback on the benefits of working for the department.

Visitors will also find a new list of frequently ask questions. This page can answer queries on applying for

various opportunities it has available for professional betterment. Topics include the mentoring program, statement of value and purpose and professional development opportunities.

The external link is available at www.modot.org/jobs. Pass it on to a friend.

Changing Safety Belt Law

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In 2006, safety belt use dropped from 77.4 percent to 75.2 percent statewide.

“Unfortunately we’re not gaining, we’re just sustaining,” said Leanna Depue, Highway Safety director. “Statistics show that states with secondary enforcement of their safety belt laws often see a leveling off in safety belt use. That’s because the law essentially ties the hands of law enforcement.”

She added: “Increased safety belt use through primary enforcement could save 90 lives a year in Missouri. That statistic alone underscores the importance of this legislation.”

For more information on the push to change Missouri’s safety belt law, visit www.savemolives.com.

Your Seat Belt on the Job

MoDOT employees are required to obey speed limits and traffic regulations, as well as to use department prescribed personal protective equipment when required.

So, you must wear a safety belt when:

- you are in or operating department vehicles or equipment
- you are in your personal vehicle when conducting official department business

MoDOT Will Seek Important Legislative Changes in 2007

With the next legislative session right around the corner, soon members of the General Assembly will be returning to their offices and the state’s business, some of which will focus on important transportation issues.

At its September meeting, the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission approved several legislative proposals for the 2007 legislative session. As a result, MoDOT’s Governmental Relations staff is ready to hit the ground running when the session opens Jan. 3.

The 2007 legislative proposals, which are closely aligned to five of the department’s TRACKER measures, include:

Safe Transportation System

Primary Safety Belt Law – MoDOT’s number one priority will be to encourage the passage of a primary safety belt law. Moving to primary enforcement could save 90 lives a year and provide the state with \$16 million in federal safety funds.

Highway Safety Name Change – References in the state statutes pertaining to the transfer of statutory powers, duties and functions previously performed by the Division of Highway Safety would

be changed from the Department of Public Safety to the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission.

Innovative Transportation Solutions

Multimodal Financing – This financing mechanism would allow MHTC to issue bonds from dedicated general revenues to fund multimodal capital improvement projects and assist local transportation providers with the necessary match required for federal transit capital grants.

Efficient Movement of Goods/Partners with Others to Deliver Transportation Services

Unified Carrier Registration

System – The Missouri General Assembly must ratify recent changes in federal law in order to participate in

a new interstate registration program known as the Unified Carrier Registration Program. This program replaces the current Single State Registration and will modify the registration requirements for the interstate exempt registration program.

Advocate for Transportation Issues

Voiding Outdoor Advertising

Permits – MoDOT is seeking the authority to void outdoor advertising permits under certain circumstances so that the department can comply with federal requirements for effective outdoor advertising control.

Better, Faster, Cheaper Is At The Heart of Solutions At Work

by Sally Oxenhandler

Using a worksheet to better track bridge maintenance items.

Designing equipment modifications to produce smoother asphalt patches.

These are just a couple of ways employees are helping us do things better, faster and cheaper . . . and now they have a chance to be rewarded for their best practices.

Solutions At Work is a new program designed to encourage employees to come up with better ways to do things and to share those best practices with other employees. The program began July 1 as a pilot project in Districts 4 and 9. Now the Solutions At Work pilot is being expanded statewide to give all employees a shot at earning rewards for their innovative practices.

The program has two goals: 1) recognizing employees, and 2) making

MoDOT more efficient, effective and safe. As employees develop best practices that can be proven to help us work better, faster and cheaper, those practices will be shared throughout the organization via an Intranet database.

Best practices have four common characteristics:

- They are innovative.
- They make a difference.
- They have a sustainable effect.
- They have the potential to be replicated and to serve as a model for generating initiatives elsewhere.

“This is not an employee suggestion system, it’s an employee sharing system,” said Mara Campbell, director of Organizational Results, which has been responsible for implementing and monitoring the district pilot project. “The message to employees is, ‘We want to hear what’s working for you.’”

Solutions At Work is different from the Performance Plus pilot project under way in our construction offices in several ways. Among other things, Performance Plus is based on future organizational performance, while Solutions At Work deals with proven performance improvements. In addition, Solutions At Work best practices don’t necessarily have to save any money. The goal of Solutions At Work is to improve daily operations in some way.

The Solutions At Work process is simple. Employees with a best practice fill out a brief form – just five questions - that can be found on the OR internal web page. The form can be submitted online, sent to solutions@modot.mo.gov or mailed inter-agency to Organizational Results. An OR analyst then reviews the suggestion and works with technical experts to determine if the best practice is feasible or not, taking

that load off of the employees. Either way, the employee is notified of OR’s findings.

“The process is meant to be as simple as possible for employees and managers,” said Campbell. “One of the main complaints from past employee suggestion systems was that the process took too long. We’re trying to absorb some of the work to make the process easy, as well as to serve as a clearinghouse for best practices. That’s part of being a full-service research program.”

Employees who come up with a successful Solutions At Work practice can earn up to 16 hours’ leave or \$300.

For more information about Solutions At Work, visit wwwi/intranet/or/solutions/index.htm.

November Service Anniversaries

45 Years		Eric E. Foster	D4
Spencer S. Perry	D10	Alan D. Kliethermes	D5
35 Years		Gail V. Rundel	D6
Stanley R. Ermeling	D6	Frank W. Tidd	D6
30 Years		Andrew T. Mueller	D8
Charles D. Bayne	D1	Emery D. Reese	D9
Louis W. Branson	D5	Roberta J. Endsley	CO
Darrell C. Sams	D7	Jay L. Smith	CO
J. Kent Bridges	D10	10 Years	
John S. Price	D10	Rochelle A. Martens	D2
James A. Brocksmith	CO	Hal D. Moore	D2
Diana M. Luebberring	CO	Andrew Strong	D4
25 Years		Maria L. Stuck	D4
William W. Polen	D4	James V. Beattie	D5
Dale D. Kurrelmeyer	D5	James E. Alter	D6
20 Years		Dennis P. Hixson	D6
Nancy L. Baker	D4	Christopher S. Sutton	D6
Robert T. Lynch	D5	Cindy Bader	D10
Carmella E. Green	D9	Judy A. Bray	CO
Danny L. Pruett	D10	Gerald P. Dunn	CO
Mary C. Shoemaker	CO	Donna S. Eads	CO
15 Years		Bryce D. Gamblin	CO
Gina R. Orozco	D1	Carolyn S. Harmon	CO
John C. Parmenter	D1	5 Years	
Grover M. Chatmon	D4	Charles A. Ramsbottom	D1
		Carey D. Beverlin	D2

September Retirements

Name	Location	Years of Service
Donald Cockrell	D6	10
Don Davidson	CO	34
Elmer Greunke	D5	41
Stephen Hollingsworth	D6	32
Donald Jones	D7	44
Allen Kadiva	CO	37
Timothy Lewis	D1	29
Spencer Perry	D10	45
James Riechers	D9	23
Terry Saylor	D5	25
James Stong	D7	19

In Memoriam

Retirees		
Donald G. Rice	D7	Aug. 25
Benjamin Bacher	D7	Sept. 2
Kenneth A. Matthews	D7	Sept. 3
Benjamin “Pete” W. Bourn	D3	Sept. 6
Gary W. Buescher	D2	Sept. 12
Agnes B. Torrence	D6	Sept. 17
Thomas L. Brown	CO	Sept. 24



Central Office

Risk Management Adjusts Liability Claims Unit, Processes

by Kristi Jamison

Accidents happen. Whether its a rock thrown by one of our mowers, a pothole in the highway, a missing sign or an uneven sidewalk at a rest area, any of these circumstances can lead to a legal claim against MoDOT. Risk Management is responsible for investigating accidents and, if necessary, handling a claim that may result.

Claims can vary from fleet vehicle liability to general liability to property damage. Currently, the functions to oversee these claims seem to vary just as much, as they are handled by staff in the districts, Central Office, Risk Management and, in some areas, by an outside contractor.

But things change. Risk Management is getting ready to streamline the way it does business. Soon staff will be reassigned to a designated district(s) to handle all of these functions on a statewide basis.

In planning this reorganization, Risk Management realized that it would be beneficial to expand the risk manage-

ment process throughout the department. It was obvious that district field personnel, the very people that are responsible for specific communities, are the most knowledgeable and thus the most logical staff to collect information about serious injury or fatal accidents that happen locally.

“MoDOT personnel that are on the ground every day are our eyes and ears in the community,” said Gerry Foster, claims administration manager. “When an accident happens, someone from the district usually drives by to see what has happened anyway. They just aren’t documenting it formally. Including them in this important process will be a considerable benefit to the department and represents a natural expansion of risk management throughout the agency.”

Part of the duties currently performed by risk management staff is to photograph and document serious injury or fatal accident scenes. This is vitally important because, as Risk Manage-

ment explains, MoDOT can be sued up to five years after an accident happens. This documentation provides accurate details, particularly when memories can fail over time.

Now certain field personnel in each district will be trained on what to look for and how to photograph and document serious injury or fatal accident scenes. The advantage to having field personnel involved in this process is two fold. First, they will personally inspect the scene and gather documentation. Second, they will be able to learn firsthand if a problem exists and, if so, arrange for repairs more quickly than before.

Handling all claims in-house is a good solution that will enable us to provide quicker, more comprehensive services to our partners. But there’s another benefit to this “adjustment.” MoDOT

will no longer have to outsource their claims adjustment needs, which will result in an annual cost savings of nearly \$200,000.

“By streamlining this process, Risk Management has found another way to do our job better, faster and cheaper, and enable the districts to respond to transportation system needs in a more timely fashion,” said Foster. “Now we will be one, cohesive work unit. Although we will still be split geographically, we will have the valuable support of our coworkers in the field.”

Risk Management will train district field staff this fall, and they are developing a handbook that will be available soon to assist field personnel in documenting incidents. The reorganization should be fully implemented by Jan. 1, 2007.



Risk Management Specialist Joanie Prenger rolls off measurements at an accident scene.

Golf Tournament is a Success

by Patti Knopke

Transportation Day at the annual Missouri 10-33 Benevolent Fund Golf Tournament raised an estimated \$17,500 through registration fees and donations. The tournament, held Sept. 11 at the Columbia Country Club, was a huge success with 192 participants.

“The fund gives families a little financial breathing room while they sort through the tragedy of losing a loved one suddenly in the line of duty,” said Don Hillis, director of System Management and MoDOT’s tournament coordinator. “I am so proud to be associated with such a giving and caring group of people at MoDOT.”

Winning teams from each flight were:

A Flight

Tony Blackstock, Chris Cloudbb, Jim Pierce, Joe Wissbaum - 57

B Flight

Bob Goodwillie, Duane Kraft, Dan Meckes, Brian Weiler - 63

C Flight

Gina Orozco, Marty Orozco, Eric Smith, Tim Stillman - 67

D Flight

Bob Becker, Brett Foster, Lavelt Horn, Jack Wilson - 71

Congratulations to all the winners! Mark your calendars for next year’s tournament on Sept. 10, 2007.

Training Professional of the Year Recognized

by Patti Knopke

Intermediate Multimodal Operations Specialist John Rice has been named as the Training Professional of the Year by the National Transit Institute.

Rice, who works in the Multimodal Transit Section, was selected by a committee of transit professionals to receive the honor. The award was presented to him at an Oct. 23 awards luncheon at NTI’s Transit Trainers Workshop in Charlotte, N.C.

At MoDOT, Rice is responsible for training not-for-profit transit providers in the areas of defensive driving, first aid and passenger assistance. He also writes specifications and helps with vehicle purchases for these agencies.

“To me, the most interesting thing about my job is working with all the different people who provide transportation services to the citizens of Missouri,” said Rice. “I also enjoy being able to travel throughout the state and take in all the beautiful scenery.”

Rice was born in Texas, but he was raised on a farm outside of Brookfield. His first job after college was teaching high school social studies. Rice then moved on to work as a school bus transportation supervisor before he answered a newspaper ad for a newly created position at MoDOT. He has been with the department since 1988.



John Rice, right, shows OATS employees in the Columbia/Boone County area how to properly use a wheel chair lift.

for more info

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D1

Northwest

Riverside Breaks Ground!

by Elaine Justus



Cathy Morrison

Helmets and gold shovels stood at attention on Oct. 16.

It has been a decade (or more) of talking, meeting, planning, discussing, designing and organizing, but after many false starts, it is now official. The Route AC (Riverside) extension has begun.

The partnershiping that went into this monumental project is almost too extensive to list: The city of St. Joseph, the Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Sen. Kit Bond, U.S. Rep. Sam Graves, and

numerous other supporters joined together with MoDOT to make this dream a reality.

St. Joseph's Public Works Director Bruce Woody served as Master of Ceremonies, while the Chamber of Commerce brought in a Bluegrass band to entertain everyone.

Over 150 people braved the gray, misty weather to witness this, the first step of many. The entire project is 1.5 miles long and will be an important transportation connection for the area.



Cathy Morrison

Loch Construction provided 1/50 scale metal miniatures of the Caterpillar D-8 bulldozer used during the ceremony. Mounted with a commemorative plaque, they were given as a permanent reminder of the value of working together.



Cathy Morrison

U.S. Sen. Christopher (Kit) Bond (fifth from the right) and U.S. Rep. Sam Graves (sixth from the right) are flanked by local officials, elected representatives, Commissioner David Gach, District Engineer Don Wichern and Bob Loch of Loch Construction as they prepare to officially start the project.



Cathy Morrison

U.S. Sen. Christopher (Kit) Bond spoke eloquently about the balance of partnership and effort that it took to make this transportation vision for the city of St. Joseph a reality.

POW/MIA - Cameron Dedication

by Elaine Justus



Shaun Schmitz

Members of the American Legion Post 95 of Liberty provided the posting of the colors at the Cameron ceremony.

We have an entire generation of Americans who have no memory about and have never been taught the meaning of the phrase, "Prisoner of War" or "Missing in Action." That was the impression of Gary Reno, retired Sgt. First Class of the United States Army, so he decided to do something about it. Working closely with state Rep. Doug Ervin and state Sen. William Stouffer, Reno was able to have 65 miles of Interstate 35 (from 1/2

mile south of Bethany to 1/2 mile north of Kearney) designated as the "POW/MIA Memorial Highway."

Two ceremonies were held to mark this event: one in Kearney on Sept. 16 (see the section of *Connections* for the Kansas City area) and one in Cameron on Oct. 7. The Missouri Veterans Home of Cameron hosted the event in Cameron where over 150 people, many in uniform, turned out to show their respect.

The most touching portion of the event was the candle lighting ceremony to honor those who are still listed as "missing." In Missouri alone, over 400 men and women are still unaccounted for: fathers, sons, husbands and daughters. As more and more time goes by, the likelihood of finding them still alive becomes a dimmer and dimmer hope.

For many advocates like Reno, there is still the dream to find their bodies and bring them home, not just for the peace of their families, but for the honor of our country.

U.S. Navy Master Chief Petty Officer Carl Carder, who is also a construction inspector in the Cameron project

office, expressed MoDOT's gratitude to Reno for this opportunity to help remind future generations that the price of freedom never has been free and that serving your country can sometimes come at a great personal cost.



Shaun Schmitz

Speaking on behalf of MoDOT was Construction Inspector Carl Carder, who just happens to be a Master Chief Petty Officer in the U.S. Navy Reserves. He is currently in service with the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 15 out of Belton and also served in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. To his right is seated Gary Reno, retired Sgt. First Class of the United States Army, who is a strong advocate for the cause of the POW/MIA. Reno is the person principally responsible for the memorialization of Interstate 35.

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D2

North Central

It's a Celebration!

Why would nearly 100 people, including Gov. Matt Blunt, gather together on an overhead interchange 16 feet above ground in 30 degree weather with the wind blowing 30 miles per hour? They were there to celebrate the opening of 10.6 miles of new four-lane highway on Route 63 between Moberly and Jacksonville. Although it was cold and everyone was turning a little blue, the sun was shining and spirits were high as state and federal legislators, local officials, and members of the community took a moment to celebrate this great improvement to the Route 63 corridor.

This segment follows the completion just one year ago of 20 miles of new four-lane on Route 63 from Kirksville to Macon. Thanks to Amendment 3 funding, upgrading the corridor will continue with two additional projects next spring. A 4.7-mile stretch of four-lane will be constructed just south of Kirksville, and a 3.6-mile stretch of four-lane north of Macon. When these two projects are completed by the end of 2007, Route 63 will become a four-lane facility from Kirksville to Jefferson City (with the exception of the city limits of Macon).



Cold weather and high winds didn't keep Gov. Matt Blunt from joining fellow guest speakers to celebrate the completion of this project.

The \$26.5 million dollar four-lane project constructed by Chester Bross Construction Company, which also included a new interchange at Business Route 63 and a new surface on the existing lanes, was the final project on this corridor in Randolph County. It is also the last major four-lane project on Route 63 in north central Missouri; so even the cold weather couldn't stop a celebration on a project this important to the region.

The tone of the day was improved safety and economic development, which are so important to a rural area like Randolph County. Joining Gov. Blunt in the ceremony were U. S. Rep. Kenny Hulshof, Senate Transportation Committee Chairman Senator Bill Stouffer, Sen. Chuck Graham, Rep. Therese Sander, Donna Spickert for U. S. Sen. Jim Talent's office, Randolph County Presiding Commissioner Jim Myles, Randolph County Economic Development Director Russell Runge,



MHTC Commissioner Mike Kehoe visits with a gentleman from the community who braved the cold weather to join the celebration. He also took the time to thank all of the MoDOT employees who worked hard to make this and many other projects across the state a reality.

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U. S. Rep. Kenny Hulshof visits with Art and Carolyn Winkler. The Winkler's lost their son Tracy on Route 63 and have been strong supporters of four-laning this facility.

MHTC Commissioner Mike Kehoe and Chief Engineer Kevin Keith.

As District Engineer Dan Niec performed his master of ceremony duties, and everyone braved the cold weather; it quickly became apparent that these

invited speakers were keeping their comments brief.

Although the wind was bitter and the ceremony short, everyone agreed this was still a great day for north central Missouri.

Protecting Our Resources

Environmental and Historic preservation training is taking place across the state, and District 2 is no exception.

Environmental and Historic Preservation Manager Gayle Unruh and her team visited with employees to provide a greater understanding of situations that may be encountered on a job that would require a permit or other action to help protect the resources of our state.



More than 90 employees from right of way, maintenance, construction, traffic, planning and design attended the training.

Honoring Years of Service

Awards ceremonies, honoring 58 employees who have been with the department from five to 30 years, were recently held in District 2. All of these employees deserve our thanks for working hard every day to make MoDOT an organization that everyone can be proud of.



Russ Mitchell, 25 years



D3

Northeast

What Caused the Bridge Deck to Drop?

The question today is, “What caused the bridge deck on Rte. 107 over the North Fork of Mark Twain Lake to drop more than eight inches?” Regardless of what happened, the bridge is closed to traffic. It happened early on a Saturday morning, the day of a big fishing tournament at the lake.

“People were not happy,” said Maintenance Superintendent Tom Threlkeld. “But it’s a matter of safety over convenience.”

Many departments have been involved in evaluating the structure, securing the area, and keeping the public informed. Divers from bridge maintenance have checked out the column supporting the deck spans and found indications of stresses. Staff from materials have drilled cores to determine subsurface geological features and what effects they may have had on the column moving. Traffic’s sign shop has stepped up and produced more than 20 signs that have been placed on or around the bridge to warn of danger.

“This is a good example of how the MoDOT team works together in a crisis,” said Assistant District Engineer Dave Silvester.

Work is under way to remove the two deck spans on the suspect column and should be completed by the time this is printed. Pictures of the bridge and removal of the spans can be found on the Northeast District web page.



Tracy and Billy Mallet enjoy the beautiful day during the annual service awards banquet for employees with 20 years or more of service. The banquet is held each year on Hannibal’s own Mark Twain Riverboat. Billy, a mechanic at Memphis, was recognized at the banquet by Kevin Keith and Kirk Juranas for his heroic efforts to help a lady who had just wrecked her car. He was the first on the scene, called emergency responders and helped keep her stable until they arrived.

8

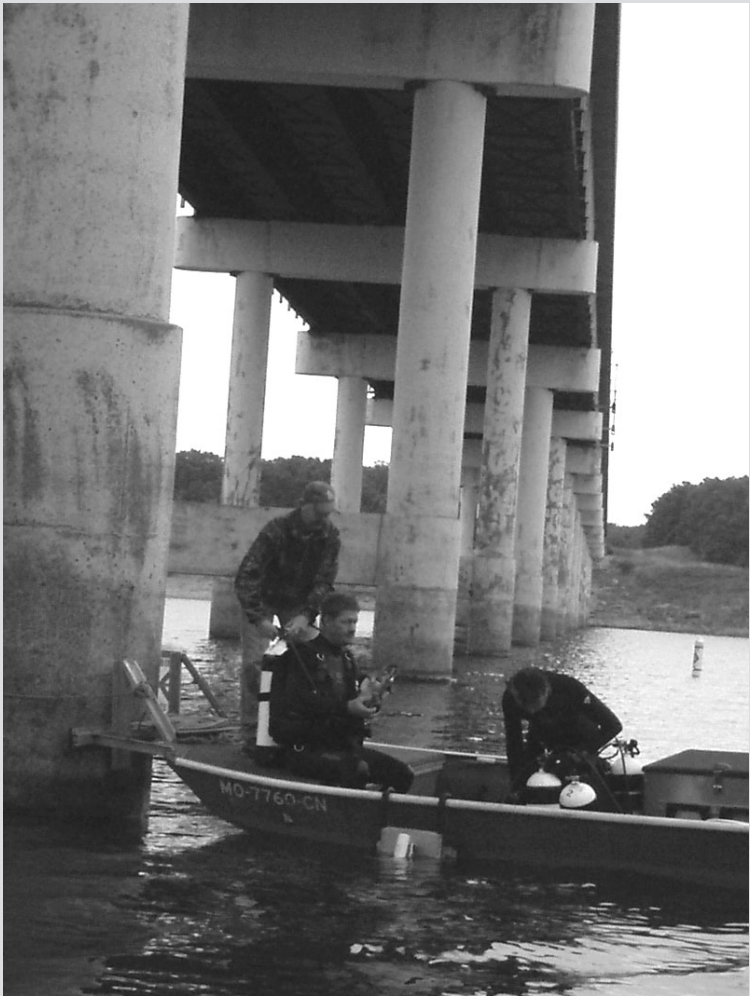
A father and son hear about safe driving and safe riding from Mike Evans, Hannibal maintenance, during Hannibal school’s Big Truck Night.



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MoDOT divers from the Jefferson City Bridge Crew, Curt Stegeman and John Wilson, spent a very cool morning diving more than 35 feet into the Mark Twain Lake to look for damage on the piers of the Route 107 bridge near Mark Twain State Park. Terry Wilson, also with Bridge Maintenance, helps on the boat.



Richard King, (above) along with several of our Memphis maintenance crew members and district office staff, helped out during the NE District’s Highway Survivor game held at Gorin Middle School last month.



More than 300 students from northeast Missouri attended Environmental Day at Mark Twain Lake. Chris Shulse, roadside supervisor (left), and Tana Akright, customer service representative, shared information about reducing litter and keeping the environment clean.



Enjoy Retirement, Mike!

Mike Traynor, from our Eolia maintenance facility, retired Nov. 1 after 28 years of service to MoDOT. Congratulations, Mike!

D4

Kansas City Area

3-Trails Crossing Signs Mark New Name for Historic Crossroads

by Steve Porter

New signs were unveiled Oct. 3 recognizing one of Kansas City’s historic crossroads by its new name: 3-Trails Crossing Memorial Highway.

The interchange of Route 71, Interstates 435 and 470 (commonly known as the Triangle) was officially named 3-Trails Crossing in March by an act of the Missouri General Assembly. A bill sponsored by State Senator Yvonne S. Wilson names the interchange in honor of the mid-19th Century pioneer routes that passed through the area: The Santa Fe, Oregon and California trails.

New highway signs recognizing the interchange as 3-Trails Crossing Memorial Highway can be seen on:

- Southbound Route 71 a half-mile south of Bannister Road
- Eastbound I-435 a quarter-mile west of Grandview Road overpass
- Westbound I-470 just east of Blue Ridge Boulevard
- Southbound I-435 just south of Bannister Road
- Eastbound I-470 at Hillcrest Road overpass

More Than 300 Attend Big Truck Night

by Joel Blobaum

Combine several hundred kids, heavy equipment and parents with cameras.

Those are the ingredients for another successful Big Truck Night at District 4. Sponsored by the Lee’s Summit Preschool PTA, the Sept. 14 event attracted 317 people to the Kansas City District’s headquarters. This year’s event marked the third time MoDOT crews have brought their work vehicles for an up-close inspection by parents and kids.



A turn at the wheel of a sweeper brought a big smile from this young man.

Preschool and early-elementary school students took full advantage of the opportunity to examine the equipment, honk the horns and take a turn sitting at the controls of a backhoe, dump truck or striper. Parents didn’t miss the chance to take pictures of their little ones in and around the big trucks that hold a special fascination for youngsters.



Kids of all ages attended the event. A walk on a flatbed was part of the fun for this little girl.

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Highway Renamed for POW/MIAs Kearney Ceremony Draws Good Crowd

by Joel Blobaum

About 200 people attended a Sept. 16 ceremony at Kearney High School to rename a 65-mile stretch of Interstate 35 as the “POW/MIA Memorial Highway.”

The section is one-half mile south of Bethany to one-half mile north of Kearney and encompasses Harrison, Daviess, DeKalb, Clinton and Clay counties.

A second dedication ceremony took place Oct. 7 at the Missouri Veterans Home in Cameron.

Retired SFC Gary Reno, United States Army Reserve, who led efforts to rename the highway, served as master

of ceremonies for the event, which honored the 408 Missourians still listed as prisoners of war or missing in action.

Retired Lt. Col. Barry Bridger, United States Air Force, who was a prisoner of war in Vietnam from 1967 to 1973, was the guest speaker.

Kansas City District Engineer Beth Wright represented MoDOT at the ceremony.



Retired Lt. Col. Barry Bridger unveils POW/MIA Memorial Highway signs during a Sept. 16 dedication ceremony in Kearney. Bridger’s fighter jet was shot down over North Vietnam in 1967 where he was held a prisoner of war in Hanoi until 1973.

Route 23 Bridge Replaced in Lafayette County

by Steve Porter

The new Route 23 bridge over Salt Fork in northeast Lafayette County opened Sept. 20. The \$925,369 bridge replacement project began May 15, and required closure of the bridge and highway for four months.

The 202-foot-long, 34-foot-wide concrete bridge replaces a 75-year-old bridge that had been closed briefly two years ago for emergency repairs. Route

23, a direct route between Concordia and Carrollton, handles about 1,500 vehicles per day. It connects Routes 24/65 and Route 20 in northeast Lafayette County. Columbia Curb and Gutter was the general contractor for the project.

Elected officials, area residents and MoDOT personnel celebrated the opening Sept. 22 with a brief ribbon-cutting ceremony.



WDAF-TV FOX 4 News meteorologist Don Harmon (right) talks to approximately 100 MoDOT employees about forecasting weather during Snow Expo training Sept. 19.

D5

Central

School Group Tours Route 5 in Camden County

by Holly Dentner

Teachers at Mills Elementary School in Lake Ozark want to give their students a sense of what's going on in their community. To help them understand why roads are an important part, they took over 400 students to the Route 5 construction site in Camden County.



Phillip Thompson

Dirt was no problem for these first graders, who happily leaned on the bulldozer for a photo.

Area Engineer Bob Lynch took the kindergartners, first- and second-graders through the project area on Sept. 28-29, impressing them with the big machines and lots of dirt.

"They asked questions about everything," said Lynch. "They called the sheep foot rollers porcupines and wanted to climb right up into the bulldozers."

During the first day of the tour, rain prevented the students from seeing actual earthmoving in progress. Instead, a bulldozer, dump truck and track hoe were moved to the edge of the construction site so the students could walk right up to and around the equipment.

"Even the teachers were surprised by the size and cost of those machines," said Lynch. "They couldn't believe the truck tires cost \$14,000 a piece."

Students who visited on the second day got to see a small portion of the seven million cubic yards of earth get scooped up by track hoes and hauled by trucks. They also watched from a safe distance as work progressed on one of the new bridges being built as part of the project.

Lynch says the tour was a good opportunity for the kids to learn about how construction sites work and the benefit the new road will have on the area.



Holly Dentner

Lots of 'wows' were heard as the buses passed the enormous machinery for the Route 5 project.

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Lake Area Project Begins in Laurie

State and local officials gathered in Laurie recently to celebrate the beginning of a new road project. MoDOT is partnering with the city to improve Route 5 through the area, between Route O and Bass Point Road, just west of the Camden County line.



Kristin Gerber

Officials pose with the district's special five-handled shovel after offering their support for the Route 5 project through Laurie.

The 1.02-mile stretch will be widened to add a center turn lane and four-foot shoulders. The project will cost \$1,051,016 and the city will contribute about half the amount.

At the groundbreaking ceremony on Oct. 6, about 50 people gathered to hear from U.S. Rep. Ike Skelton, Donna

Spickert from U.S. Sen. Jim Talent's office, state Sen. Carl Vogel, state Rep. Tom Self and Laurie Mayor Rick Purdon.

Widening Route 5 through this portion of Morgan County will improve traffic flow and safety in the area. The project completion date is late May 2007.

Mizzou Fans Buckle Up for Football Game

by Holly Dentner

Mizzou football fans enjoyed more than just tailgates and touchdowns at the game on Sept. 30 in Columbia. The Central Region Group of the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety was there to spread the message about wearing safety belts and driving sober.



Cathy Morrison

The wrecked utility truck attracted lots of attention. The vehicle's driver was wearing his safety belt and only received minor injuries from the crash.

Almost 58,000 people attended the game, where coalition volunteers talked to people about wearing safety belts, driving sober and complying with the new booster seat law. The highway patrol's seat belt convincer and MoDOT's crashed utility truck were placed inside the stadium and proved to be popular with the crowd.

"We wanted to put our message in as many places as possible during the game," said Matt Myers, district traffic engineer. "Even the hand stamps for people who wanted to exit and re-enter the stadium during the game had the Arrive Alive logo and the saveMOlives.com Web site."

Eighteen coalition volunteers worked at the game, including MoDOT District 5 employees; ThinkFirst Missouri representatives; and officers from the Camdenton, Columbia, and Osage

Beach police departments, the Camden County Sheriff's Department and the Missouri State Highway Patrol Troop F.

At half time, coalition members descended to the field to participate in the half time presentation. As the group gathered on the sidelines, they got a field-level view of the action.

"MU scored a touchdown right before the end of the first half, and we were right there on the sidelines watching," said Myers. "As soon as they left the field, our group walked out and accepted the game ball."

The Central Region Coalition is working with Mizzou to raise awareness for the Arrive Alive message and help reduce fatalities on Missouri roadways. By targeting the campaign on one of the state's most popular sports programs, the coalition believes the message will reach not only central Missouri, but also drivers and passengers throughout the state.



Cathy Morrison

Missouri State Highway Patrol Captain Dale Schmidt accepts the game ball on behalf of the Central Region Coalition for Roadway Safety.

D6

St. Louis Area

Construction is an Option

by Debbie Allen

Peeking the interest of high school juniors and seniors to seek a career in construction may seem like a lofty goal but, for the fourth straight year, District 6, in coordination with St. Louis Council of Construction Consumers, hosted the annual Construction Career Day. The event was held Oct. 4 at the ACCESS Center facility located at 700 Rosedale in the University City-Delmar Loop.

Due to workforce crises within the construction trades, this event strives to expose area youth to the opportunities within the construction industry. Today there are more than 300,000 unfilled positions at every level of the industry nationwide.

The organizing committee of construction industry practitioners, educators, union representatives, and members of SLCCC plan and execute Construction Career Day held in St. Louis.

Approximately 500 students from the St. Louis metropolitan area and their instructors attended. In addition to

full-time employment opportunities, participating organizations are offering summer jobs/internships, on the job training and cooperative education.

The wide array of organizations represented on the planning committee reflects the critical shortage of skilled personnel needed in today's construction-related sectors. Technological advancements require that all industry personnel be more skilled and technically trained than ever before.

The huge number of unfilled construction industry jobs compels the industry, government, and educational institutions to work together to effectively market the tremendous opportunities available to our youth. The construction industry offers career opportunities to all students, whether college bound or planning to enter the workforce after high school. Consider these statistics: Barely 9 percent of the students who graduate from high school in Missouri go on to graduate from a four-year university. Less than 50 percent of all Missouri high school graduates (44.1



Strapped in for safety, Randy Waldon, D6 Striping, discusses the technical operation of the cherry picker with two female students from this year's Construction Career Day event before taking them up for a ride.

percent) go to a four-year college. These statistics illustrates a huge need in for career technology education within Missouri's educational system.

District 6 volunteers for this event were: Reyna Spencer, Gloria Bond, Steven H. Lockett, Jermyn Johnson, Rose La Rocco, Connie Gooch, Kim Rumpsa, Terri Smith, Kevin Steiger, Floyd N. Reynolds, Sheila Leopold, Michael K Earls, Assistant District En-

gineer Thomas Blair, Randy Waldon, Robert Willet, Charles Grey, Larry Warden and Ena Hawthorne.

Other volunteers included: Lester Woods, Stefan Denson, Kristi Hixson and Missy Stued-le all from Central Office and A.J. Byrd from District 4.



State, local and federal officials attended the Route K bridge ribbon cutting ceremony on Oct. 12. The \$1.9 million project included replacing the old Route K bridge over Rock Creek in the city of Kimmswick. The old bridge was built in approximately 1932 and had narrow 10-foot lanes and no shoulders.

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Route K Bridge Widened

Before construction began on the 70-year old bridge over Rock Creek on Route K, delicate and challenging right of way issues were successfully negotiated to begin the project on time.

MoDOT widened the driving lanes, added shoulders, raised the grade to minimize flooding and shifted the roadway and bridge alignment to the south.

During construction, the shift in alignment allowed the old bridge to stay open while the new bridge was being erected. Only a short-term bridge closure was required while construction was under way to the credit of the Mehlville Construction Project Office, Krupp Construction Co., MoDOT's Project Design Team and Horner & Shifrin, Inc.



The old Rte. K bridge over Rock Creek (to the right) was more than 70 years old and was restricted to one-lane traffic due to its deteriorated condition.

D7

Southwest

Month-Old Guard Cable Doing Its Job

by Wendy Brunner-Lewis

Median guard cable is being installed along Interstate 44 in some places and has already been installed in others across the state. District 7's stretch should be finished later this year.

The cable between mile markers nine and 36 (Joplin to near Stotts City) was finished in September. From that time until mid-October, the cable has already been hit six to 10 times. None of the injuries were serious.

According to Joplin Senior Crew Worker James Renfro, who witnessed one of the guard cable accidents, "It tore up the car really bad, but there's no doubt the cable kept the car from crossing into the oncoming lanes."

Without the cables strung in the median to prevent crossover accidents, one can only wonder how serious the accidents could have been.



The newly installed median guard cable was tested early on by numerous hits.

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Entrances/Exits Painted with Buckle-Up Reminder

by Wendy Brunner-Lewis



John Lacey, left, and Mendi Allgood paint an important message on the district office parking lot.

Area motorists are reminded to buckle their seatbelts every time they exit schools and businesses thanks to the Blueprint for Safer Roadways' Arrive Alive campaign. District 7 offered "Buckle Up" stencils, paint and reflective beads to schools and community groups to paint the Buckle-Up reminder on their parking lot exits.

Communities that have used the stencils or that are scheduled to use them soon are: Carl Junction, Nevada, Liberal, Lamar, Appleton City, Sarcoxie, Carthage, Neosho and Camp

Crowder National Guard, Marionville, Purdy and Pierce City.

District 7 wanted to remind its own employees and visitors to buckle up too, so district office employees Mendi Allgood and John Lacey spent a day painting the message on all the parking lots at the office.

Studies show that seatbelts can reduce fatalities to front-seat occupants of passenger cars by 45 percent and of light trucks by 60 percent.

Life After MoDOT...D7 Retirees' Corner Harvey Vice: Working in God's House Now

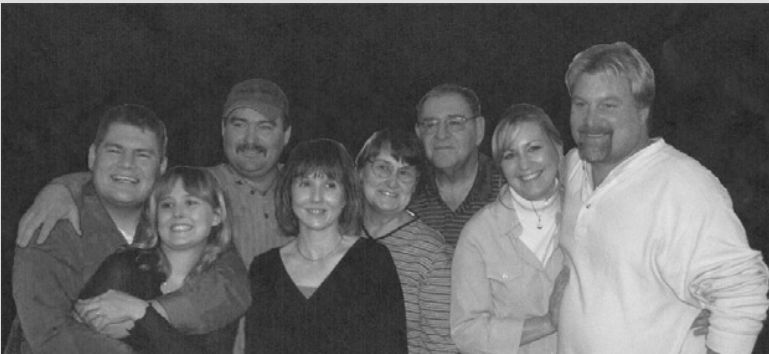
by Celesta Dennen and Wendy Brunner-Lewis

When Lamar Maintenance Superintendent Harvey Vice retired from MoDOT in 2003, he knew he needed to work to stay out of mischief. Where better to do that than in God's house? After 36 years of cleaning up Missouri's roads, he's now cleaning up the Lamar First Baptist Church as a part-time janitor and maintenance man.

Vice started with MoDOT in District 4, and in 1982 he moved to Lamar to become the maintenance superintendent there.

He and his wife Lorraine have been married 45 years. She works at the church as a secretary. They have three children: Harvey Lee, who lives in Clinton; Chrissy, who lives in Oklahoma City; and Robert, who lives in Joplin; and five grandchildren. Robert works in the District 7 Motor Carrier Services office.

Vice's favorite pastime since retiring is playing golf every afternoon with other retirees. He plans to "continue doing what I'm doing, which has been good to me so far."



From left to right: Robert and Christina Vice, Harvey Lee and Janelle Vice, Lorraine and Harvey Vice, and Chrissy and Jeff Hall.

D8

Springfield Area

D8 Mourns Loss of Sign Crew's Will Crain

by Bob Edwards and Angela Eden

Sign Crew Seasonal Crew Worker Will Crain is remembered as an upbeat person who enjoyed the outdoors and loved to take his two young sons fishing.

"He could make you laugh even when you're having a bad day," said Sunshine Maintenance Specialist Bret Hicks, a lifelong friend and distant cousin.



Will Crain

William L. Crain II died Oct. 17 in an on-the-job accident on the I-44 North Outer Road between Strafford and Northview. He was part of a crew putting up a sign along westbound I-44. He was 35 and lived at Walnut Grove.

Will often took his sons, Gabe, 9, and

Ben, 8, fishing at the family farm pond. He attended their many activities, including soccer games. He got great satisfaction from tending beef cattle and putting up a good hay crop.

Signing and Striping Supervisor Quintin Taylor said Will was known as "The Beam Man" for his speed and skill in cutting steel sign posts or beams.

Taylor said Will was a straightforward individual: "You always knew where you stood with him."

Will was in his third season working in District 8. He had spent one year working out of Republic Maintenance and two years with the Sign Crew based in Springfield.

Chip Seal Program Expanding To Help Preserve Rural Roads

by Angela Eden

District 8 is developing a three- to five-year pavement management plan for rural roads, and the work to preserve those roads will focus on chip seals as the primary surface treatment.

The work will be paid for out of district maintenance funds.

The district's chip seal numbers have climbed steadily each year, from 19.5 miles of low-volume roads chip sealed in 2002 to 175 miles in 2006. Chip seals will be done on 220 miles in 2007 and 300 miles in 2008.

"It's where we're going," said Senior Pavement Specialist Brad Brown.

Chip seals are part of the department's "practical design" approach for maintenance – conserving dollars by using less extensive but still effective methods to take care of the system, said Assistant District Engineer Matt Seiler.

Using a mixture of rock and oil to seal the road surface is much less expensive

than a one inch hot-mix overlay and can be done efficiently and well by Maintenance forces.

The average cost of a chip seal is \$17,000 a mile at 2006 costs, Brown said. The average cost for a contractor to resurface a road with one inch of hot-mix is \$33,000.

"The expanded chip seal program will require even more coordination among maintenance shops, putting crews together and pooling equipment for longer periods of time," said Maintenance Engineer Dave O'Connor. "But maintenance crews are up to the challenge.

"It's a fairly aggressive program," O'Connor said. "We feel it's an attainable goal."

Roadway Safety Coalition Reaches 'Ag' Audience

by Bob Edwards

Thousands of Ozark Fall Farmfest visitors who were seeking ways to improve their farming operations took home matter-of-fact information on – and vivid impressions of – the importance of safety belt use in cars and trucks.

The safety message was provided by



Bob Edwards

D8 at Work

Installing new drain pipes underneath Dallas County Route E between Tunas and Leadmine (top photo) are, from left, Plad Senior Crew Worker Sim Smitherman, Buffalo Senior Crew Worker John Stepp (in loader), Bolivar Maintenance Specialist Darrel Peebles and Seasonal Crew Worker Travis Ewing. All are part of a combined crew from Buffalo, Plad, Halfway, Humansville and Bolivar working on the project.

Credit Union Manager Brad Williams, left, (middle photo) helps retiree George DeWoody with a financial transaction.

Signing and Striping Crew Supervisor Chuck White (bottom photo), working near Blue Eye, reloads a striper and then paints (inset photo) the centerline on nearby Taney County Route UU.

"Talkin' Transportation"
Call-In Radio Show

KWTO 560 AM, Springfield

10-10:50 a.m. Wednesdays

radiospringfield.com

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D9

South Central

Second Year for South Central District Employee Appreciation

The commitment of South Central District employees to our customers will be celebrated for a second year during four days of Employee Appreciation on Oct. 19 and 24-26. Appreciation luncheons

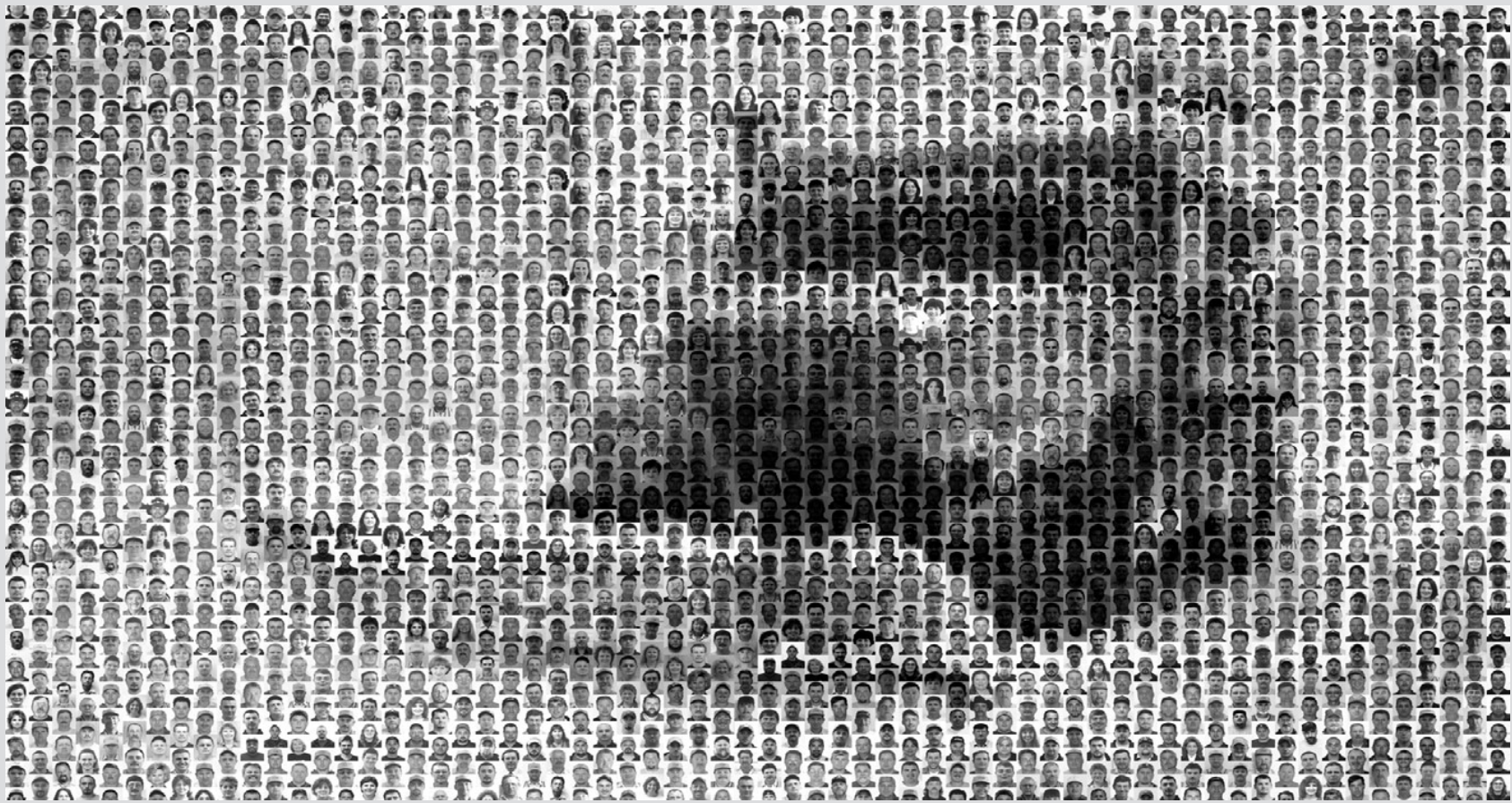
will be hosted in each area and for the District Office.

In addition, special accomplishments including attendance and low usage of sick leave will be recognized. Slide

shows featuring candid shots of employees at work and play will be shared.

“The quality of work in our district is directly linked to the caliber of our employees,” said South Central District

Engineer Tom Stehn. “I am pleased to be able to gather them together in recognition of their hard work. We are very fortunate in our district to have a team atmosphere.”



September, October Busy Months for Ceremonies

The South Central District played host to several ceremonies recently. In September, a memorial highway-naming ceremony was held in honor of the late Gov. Mel Carnahan, and a ribbon was cut on the Jacks Fork Bridge, Route 17 in Texas County. Improvements to Route 72, Phelps and Dent counties, were dedicated in October.

Mel Carnahan Memorial Highway

The South Central District assisted Rep. Sara Lampe in hosting a memorial highway-naming ceremony in honor of the late Gov. Mel Carnahan on Sept. 14. The ceremony was held at the St. James Welcome Center, located at the 195-mile marker on Interstate 44, where the signs will be posted.

Former U.S. Sen. Jean Carnahan spoke to members of the Carnahan family, Carnahan supporters and elected officials in attendance.

MoDOT, ONSR Partnership Celebrated at Bridge Ribbon Cutting

A ribbon cutting was held on the new Jacks Fork Bridge, Route 17 in Texas County on Sept. 26. District Engineer Tom Stehn thanked the many partners who made the project possible including district design, right of way and construction staff; Ozark National Scenic Riverways; Sen. Chuck Purgason; Reps. JC Kuessner and Don Wells; and the commissioners from Howell and Texas counties.

Roadway Improvements Dedicated to Citizens

A dedication ceremony took place Oct. 2 for Route 72 in Phelps and Dent counties. District Engineer Tom Stehn dedicated the improvements to the citizens and partners of the two counties during

the event in Salem. Also speaking at the ceremony were Sen. Frank Barnitz,

Rep. Jason Robinson and former Rep. Ken Ferbleman.



Clockwise, from top: Rep. Don Wells, Sen. Chuck Purgason, Sen. Frank Barnitz, Rep. Sara Lampe and former U.S. Sen. Jean Carnahan.

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D10

Southeast

Violent Weather Strikes Tornadoes and Flooding Impact Southeast Residents

by Angie Thomason

On Friday, Sept. 29, thunderstorms came rolling through southeast Missouri during the afternoon hours and initially spawned tornadoes. Crosstown, which is south of Perryville, was directly hit by a F4 tornado.

After the storm passed, residents realized how great the damage was. Roofs were gone, trees were ripped apart and cars were flipped over. Luckily, no one was seriously injured in this event.

The tornado was not the only damaging element this storm system was carrying. The storm dumped 14 inches to 18 inches of rain in the bootheel.

Several maintenance crew employees helped residents stay safe. Many crew members were out Friday, Saturday and Sunday removing limbs, placing “water over roadway” signs at localized flooding locations, repairing damaged pipes and monitoring roadway conditions.

David Rainey, maintenance specialist at the Qulin maintenance building, was called out on Sept. 29 at 8:30 p.m. and did not return home until 7:30 a.m. the next day. “Residents haven’t seen a rain event like this in years, if ever,” said Rainey.



The F4 tornado came through the city of Crosstown on Sept. 29. The tornado flipped this car over (left) and ripped the roof off this home (below).



Rainey also assisted in the rescue of a family who was trapped in the flash flood. “We received a call from another crew member’s family. There was 18 inches of water in the house,” said Rainey. “We picked up the family and got them to higher ground.”

The flash flood also closed several roads near Qulin. Route N was closed

for five days and water covered Route 53 in four different places.

Roads have since been reopened and the rebuilding has started, but Sept. 29 will be a day many southeast Missouri residents will never forget.

SEMO District Fair 2006



At the SEMO District Fair Parade, the Cape Girardeau Police Department brought a vehicle that was involved in a car crash. Parade walkers wore their Arrive Alive t-shirts to support the message.



Fairgoers had their first chance to view and ride the Seat Belt Convincer. It simulates a car crash at 5 mph and brings the rider to a sudden stop. Riders received a sticker that read, “I’m convinced” after experiencing the convincer.

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Sitting with the EAC Chair

by Mary Kalinowski

Jason Williams, transportation project designer, was elected chairman of the Employee Advisory Council in July. I had the opportunity to sit down with Jason and ask questions concerning his newly elected position.

Q. What do you feel are your greatest responsibilities as chairman?

A. Keeping the EAC moving forward with doing things that provide a positive benefit for both the department and employees. We have assembled an ambitious group of people who want to do good things for the department and its employees, which makes life as chairman very enjoyable.

Q. What is the role of the EAC?

A. While MoDOT is a great place to work, most would agree that there is always room for improvement. The EAC exists to look for ways to foster improvement. We work hard to make MoDOT a more positive place to work by reviewing policies with management, promoting diversity within the department and opening lines of communication between upper management and the employees. Each month we learn more about our role within the department, and we continue to improve in fulfilling our role.

Q. What is the biggest misconception about the EAC (what the EAC is not)?

A. The EAC is not an alternative to the grievance process. The council was not formed to provide a means of circumventing human resources grievance procedures. When the EAC receives concerns dealing with grievances,

discrimination or sexual harassment, we forward them to human resources or audits and investigations.

Q. What type of relationship does the EAC have with senior management?

A. I believe the EAC has a strong working relationship with senior management. Our group often assists senior management in the policy review process. As senior management has become familiar with the EAC, they have begun to involve us earlier in that process. I think senior management sees the EAC as an effective means of communicating ideas to the employees and gathering feedback. This communication is not one-way; the EAC discusses nearly every employee concern with senior management.



Connections

The mission of *Connections* is to be a monthly source of Missouri Department of Transportation news and feature articles that connect employees statewide. It is distributed to MoDOT employees and retirees.

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Our mission is to provide a world-class transportation experience that delights our customers and promotes a prosperous Missouri.



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Director Talks With Employees About the Good, Bad and Ugly

Story by Sally Oxenhandler, photos by Cathy Morrison

"I love my job. I love MoDOT and working with you. I feel privileged to be here with you. We have problems, but every organization has problems."

That's how Director Pete Rahn answered one employee who asked him at a recent staff luncheon to sum up the good, the bad and the ugly of being director. About 85 employees - selected randomly from throughout the state - attended the Oct. 5 brown bag lunch hosted by Rahn to talk with employees about issues and concerns.

Rahn held the luncheon to give employees a chance to come to Jefferson City and visit with him on Central Office turf as a change of pace from meeting with employees in the districts.

"As I travel around the state, I try to meet with as many employees as my schedule allows," Rahn said. "But I wanted to take the employee meetings one step further by inviting a few folks to come to Jefferson City. I think it's good to shake things up now and again."

Rahn said he'd like to hold the lunches in Jefferson City periodically - if

employees think they're helpful. He'll also continue to meet with employees when in the districts.

Here's a summary of some of the questions and answers posed during the luncheon. The complete list can be found on our Intranet site, wwwi.

Q Why don't we have step raises any more?

A The rest of the state agencies haven't been funded for raises, so MoDOT has had to follow suit and hasn't been able to provide step raises. MoDOT salaries rank 31st when compared to the rest of the states. MoDOT has made every attempt to compensate employees in other ways than raises. As an example, the commission hasn't raised medical expenses in six years now.

Q With our pay steps, a new hire can come into MoDOT and make the same salary as someone who has been in that job for nine years and has more experience. Why can't we leave the steps alone so we can have a certain amount of seniority?

A Seniority shouldn't solely determine what someone makes. Pay is based on responsibility, how well you do the job and your experi-

ence. We do have to find a balance. We cannot penalize people coming in, but I'll visit with Human Resources about this situation. I understand your concerns.

Q Flextime decisions used to be left up to individuals. Now it seems as if managers decide what's best. Flextime needs to benefit everyone not just MoDOT.

A I leave it up to my managers to determine the most productive way to manage their staff. We ultimately have to make the decision as to what's best for the taxpayers. If it is not good for the taxpayers, you can't do it just because you want to.

Q Do you see a decrease in MoDOT's staffing needs because of the Safe & Sound Bridge Improvement Plan?

A I don't think it will decrease our staffing needs. The 800 bridge program is a package we are asking industry to respond to and finance. We don't know if they will do that. We also want them to be responsible for the structural integrity of the work. We want a warranty on their work. The reality is that the bridges [in the program] are 3s and 4s (meaning most of them are in poor condition), so it's

obvious we haven't spent lots of staff or resources on them anyway. We've had to focus on other ongoing work and will continue to do so. Amendment 3 allowed us to ramp up and caused a construction bubble. (See additional comments on the Intranet.)

Q We stopped mowing because of high gas prices, and we got lots of criticism. We went back to mowing, and now we get compliments.

A We're looking for balance. You might want to mow right of way to right of way, but we have to decide if that's the most productive use of your time.

Q SRI had a big hit on maintenance, and we had to let the lettered routes go. Will we see additional funds for minor routes in the near future?

A No, our priorities will be the Smooth Roads Initiative and then the remaining major roads. We want to hold our own on the lettered routes, but it will be three years before we see extra resources going to lettered roads. Major roads have more economic impact. From a business standpoint, we have to look at major roads first.

Q The last employee satisfaction survey seemed to show employees have been worked harder then ever. Do you sense employees are getting happier?

A Employee satisfaction levels have gone up. I think people like to feel productive and take pride in their work. I have heard people say they don't mind telling people they work for MoDOT now.

